



This new monthly department will highlight innovations and improvements in the use of materials in the automotive industry.

Composite body

Ford Motor Co. is working on an all-fiberglass reinforced composite body design. The prototype minivan space frame was molded by Excel Pattern Works using Unifilo continuous strand mat preforms from Vetrotex CertainTeed and vinylester resin supplied by Ashland Chemical, molded around a low-density foam core supplied by BASF and American Sunroof.

The lightweight body structure consists of six composite components—the underbody, a cross car beam, right and left body side panels, and inner/outer roof panels. These compo-



nents are joined together through a unique adhesive bonding system which eliminates mechanical fasteners. The bonding system contributes to the structural strength of the space frame and speeds the production process. Ashland Chemical supplies the adhesive.

For more information, Circle 110.